



Illinois Department of Transportation

Diversity Matters!

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2011

IDOT to Host Public Meetings on Target Market Program, New Financing Initiatives

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will host three public meetings in December to obtain feedback on the Target Market Program and to make Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms aware of new initiatives designed to help address specific financial needs.

The meetings will start at 11:30 a.m. and take place at the following locations:

Dec. 14 – Carter G. Woodson Regional Library, 9525 S. Halsted St., Chicago.

Dec. 15 – The Gateway Building, 200 Northeast Water St., Peoria.

Dec. 16 – East St. Louis Public Library, 5300 State St., East St. Louis.

The Target Market Program, if implemented, would identify state-funded projects for bidding by minority-owned and women-owned firms and encourage eligible firms to become qualified DBE contractors and subcontractors. At the three public meetings, contractors and subcontractors will be invited to share their experiences with or comments about the Target Market Program to assist IDOT on potential improvements to increase participation. IDOT staff also will outline a new initiative designed to help DBE firms obtain necessary financing and bonding to qualify for the bidding process.

For more information on the Target Market Program and the meetings, please contact Monica Schulter at 312-793-3307.

Illinois Senate Confirms Ann L. Schneider as Secretary, First Woman Appointed to Lead Illinois Department of Transportation

On Nov. 29, the Illinois Senate voted unanimously to confirm Governor Pat Quinn's appointment of Ann L. Schneider as the Illinois Secretary of Transportation (IDOT), the first woman in the history of the agency to hold the position. Schneider leads an IDOT work force of more than 5,200 employees with oversight of more than \$2.5 billion in capital projects during 2011.

Since joining IDOT in 2005, Secretary Schneider has served as Chief of Operations and Director of Finance and Administration/Chief Fiscal Officer. Before joining IDOT, she served as the Chief Fiscal Officer for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and as Budget Operations Director at the Governor's Office of Management and Budget for nearly 2 years. She

also has served as the Assistant State Comptroller for Fiscal Policy.

Secretary Schneider was awarded a Bachelor's of Art degree from Augustana College in Rock Island and a Masters of Public Administration from the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Secretary Schneider has served as Acting Secretary since July 1, 2011.

IDOT Launches Diversity Website to Help Inform Public about Business and Employment Opportunities

The Illinois Department of Transportation launched a new website to help communicate and improve employment and contracting opportunities for minority-owned and women-owned firms and for prospective minority workers in Illinois. "We have designed this website specifically to provide small businesses with quick and direct access to IDOT construction and consulting related information, and to better inform qualified candidates about employment opportunities pertaining to positions such as Civil Engineering, Engineering Technician, Techni-

cal Manager, and Highway Maintainer," said Secretary Ann L. Schneider. "IDOT is utilizing every technological opportunity to direct employment and contracting communications to qualified minority-owned and women-owned businesses, as well as job candidates, to help improve diversity in both contracting and employment." The launch of the website is a critical step toward helping qualified firms and individuals take advantage of any available contracting and employment opportunities, Schneider added. Along with improved navigation

and better usability, the website offers each visitor access to current statistics on construction projects, hiring, and recruiting efforts. It also includes an interactive events calendar, a picture slideshow, useful video clips and a live Twitter feed to provide diversity related news in real time. To check out the website, visit www.diversity.dot.illinois.gov. For a look at how to navigate the website, visit IDOT's You Tube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEbqKTy6Tus>.

IDOT Employees Contribute Nearly 1,200 Pounds of Food and Supplies to Troops Serving Overseas

Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider is proud to announce the success of the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) collection drive for the Operation Support Our Troops - America organization. As a result of the collection drive, IDOT donated food and supplies from employees across the state totaling nearly 1,200 pounds. IDOT employees also wrote more than 170 Christmas cards and personal letters to be sent to servicemembers.

All nine IDOT districts participated in the collection drive and served as drop off locations.

For more information about Operation Support our Troops - America and other programs for our Veterans and servicemembers, visit www.OSOTAmerica.org and www.OperationHomefront.org.

IDOT and HACIA Joined Forces to Provide More Networking Opportunities

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Hispanic American Construction Industry Association (HACIA) recently partnered to host a Mentor-Protégé Networking Event at the East Bank Club in Chicago to help improve diversity in contracting.

The event attracted more than 120 attendees from minority firms and small businesses, and encouraged networking be-

tween experienced engineer firms and members of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program to enable growth and facilitate more opportunities for minority-owned and women-owned firms.

The Mentor Protégé Consultant Program was created in 2009 to encourage more of IDOT's engineering consultant partners to develop mentoring partnerships

with disadvantaged business firms to help them become more competitive and stronger.

Under the guidance and leadership of Illinois Governor Pat Quinn and Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann Schneider, IDOT will continue to find ways to improve minority participation on state and federally funded contracts to ensure minority and female owned businesses are put to work.

Promoting Diversity Through IDOT Civil Engineering

Any student interested in a career in Civil Engineering may have an opportunity to get college tuition paid for through a scholarship program offered by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Civil Engineering students who are Illinois residents and enrolled full-time at select Illinois colleges and universities are eligible for the IDOT Civil Engineering Scholarship.

"IDOT continually strives to be nationally competitive in the civil engineering marketplace by providing financial support for the education of motivated students from under-represented groups," said Lesa Branham, Chief of Diversity Recruitment and Outreach. "Through IDOT's Civil Engineering Scholarship Program, diversity and quality among IDOT's engineering staff is increased."

In addition, recipients of the scholarship

may receive the opportunity to work for IDOT during summer breaks and could potentially earn full-time employment with IDOT upon graduation.

The scholarship program utilizes federal transportation funds to enhance the diversity and quality of IDOT's civil engineering workforce. IDOT may award up to 20 scholarships each year, providing tuition assistance in an Illinois engineering program on an annual basis for up to five years. In the past, successful candidates were eligible for up to \$7,000 each academic year to help offset the cost of tuition, fees and books. However, with the signing of Public Act 097-0288, Governor Pat Quinn increased the yearly scholarship amount to up to \$7,500, effective as of January 1, 2012.

Currently, students receiving the IDOT Civil Engineering Scholarship represent

the following Illinois institutions:

- Bradley University
- Illinois Institute of Technology
- Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
- University of Illinois Chicago
- University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

Northwestern Illinois University and Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville are additional Illinois schools with ABET-accredited Civil Engineering programs that are eligible institutions participating in the scholarship program. Applications for the 2012-2013 academic year will be posted in the upcoming weeks on the IDOT website <http://www.dot.il.gov/scholarships>. Students from under-represented groups are strongly encouraged to apply.

Mentors Needed for Springfield Elementary School

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is seeking mentors on behalf of Springfield Ball Charter School to work with students during the school day.

"Research has shown that mentoring can be one of the most significant factors in a child's success in school," said Springfield Ball Charter Principal, Dr. Nicole Nash Gales. "These partnerships provide a wonderful opportunity for students to develop a relationship with an adult mentor who is volunteering their time to make a difference in a child's life."

Typically, mentors meet once a week for 30 to 60 minutes during lunch periods or

other times of the day that are convenient for both mentors and mentees.

Mentors are needed in the following areas, but not limited to:

Reading Buddies:

Reading with a child

Career Shadowing:

Sharing your areas of professional expertise and educational preparation by talking with a student or group of students about how your company or organization works

Classroom Support:

Assisting in the classrooms, and science or computer labs

Tutoring:

Assisting students with homework, incomplete class work, or needed skills (i.e. Math facts)

Gardening:

Supporting the school outdoor education program

The Springfield Ball Charter School, located at 2530 East Ash Street, is in District 186 and serves 378 students from kindergarten through 8th grade.

For more information, contact Judy Lascody at 217-525-3275 or jlas-cody@spsl186.org.

Current Procurement Opportunities

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) announces current opportunities open for bid:

PSD Steel, Sheet Piling PZ-27 for IDOT - Central Management Services, on behalf of the Illinois Department of Transportation is issuing an Invitation for Bid (IFB) for a one-time purchase of Steel Sheet Piling for delivery to Springfield, IL.

For more information, potential vendors can visit the Illinois Procurement Bulletin at www.purchase.state.il.us.